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LEGISLATIVE SESSION

MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate be in a period of morning business, with Senators permitted to speak therein for up to 10 minutes each.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

MESSAGE FROM THE HOUSE RECEIVED DURING ADJOURNMENT

ENROLLED BILL SIGNED

Under the authority of the order of the Senate of January 3, 2017, the Secretary of the Senate, on December 21, 2018, during the adjournment of the Senate, received a message from the House of Representatives announcing that the Speaker had signed the following enrolled bill:

S. 3628. An act to reauthorize the National Flood Insurance Program.

Under the authority of the order of the Senate of January 3, 2017, the enrolled bill was signed on December 21, 2018, during the adjournment of the Senate, by the Acting President pro tempore (Mr. DAINES).

ENROLLED BILL PRESENTED

The Secretary of the Senate reported that on December 21, 2018, she had presented to the President of the United States the following enrolled bill:

S. 3628. An act to reauthorize the National Flood Insurance Program.

SUBMISSION OF CONCURRENT AND SENATE RESOLUTIONS

The following concurrent resolutions and Senate resolutions were read, and referred (or acted upon), as indicated:

By Mr. WARNER (for himself, Mr. MENENDEZ, Mr. COONS, Mr. REED, Mr. BLUMENTHAL, Mr. CARPER, and Mr. VAN HOLLEN):

S. Res. 741. A resolution expressing the sense of the Senate on the letter of resignation of Secretary of Defense James Mattis and on the decision of President Trump to rapidly withdraw United States forces from Syria; to the Committee on Foreign Relations.

By Mr. JONES (for himself and Mr. PERDUE):

S. Res. 742. A resolution designating the first week of December 2018, and supporting the designation of each first week of December thereafter, as "Cancer Screen Week", identifying the burden of cancer in the United States, and encouraging people to talk with their healthcare providers about appropriate screenings for the prevention and early detection of cancer; considered and agreed to.

By Mr. CARDIN (for himself, Ms. COLLINS, Mr. REED, and Mr. VAN HOLLEN):

S. Res. 743. A resolution congratulating the International Association of Fire Fighters on the 100th anniversary of its founding; considered and agreed to.

SUBMITTED RESOLUTIONS

SENATE RESOLUTION 741—EXPRESSING THE SENSE OF THE SENATE ON THE LETTER OF RESIGNATION OF SECRETARY OF DEFENSE JAMES MATTIS AND ON THE DECISION OF PRESIDENT TRUMP TO RAPIDLY WITHDRAW UNITED STATES FORCES FROM SYRIA

Mr. WARNER (for himself, Mr. MENENDEZ, Mr. COONS, Mr. REED, Mr. BLUMENTHAL, Mr. CARPER, and Mr. VAN HOLLEN) submitted the following resolution; which was referred to the Committee on Foreign Relations:

S. RES. 741

Whereas James Mattis served the United States with distinction over the course of a long career in the United States Marine Corps and as Secretary of Defense;

Whereas the Senate concurs with the following sentiments expressed in letter of resignation submitted by Secretary Mattis to President Trump:

(1) The strength of the United States is inextricably linked to the strength of our system of alliances and partnerships.

(2) The United States cannot protect our interests or serve as the indispensable nation in the free world without those alliances and partnerships.

(3) Maintaining that system of alliances and partnerships requires that the United States demonstrate respect for our allies.

(4) While the Armed Forces of the United States cannot serve as the world's policeman, the United States must use all tools of American power to provide for the common defense, including providing effective leadership to our alliances.

(5) Those alliances and partnerships have assisted the United States in increasing our national security, for example when all North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) nations fought alongside the United States following the attacks of September 11, 2001, and when 74 nations joined the effort to defeat the threat from the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS).

(6) The United States must demonstrate resolve and be unambiguous in our approach to countries whose strategic interests run counter to our own.

(7) The Russian Federation and China wish to shape a world order consistent with their authoritarian model, allowing them to veto other nations' economic, diplomatic, and security decisions, and to promote their own interests at the expense of other nations, the United States, and our allies.

(8) The United States must do everything possible to advance a rules-based international order that is most conducive to our security, prosperity, and values, and our efforts in that regard are strengthened by the solidarity of our alliances.

(9) United States military pressure has demonstrated considerable, but incomplete progress against global terrorist groups, particularly al Qaeda, the group responsible for the September 11, 2001, terrorist attacks on the United States and the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria, who threaten the stability of the Middle East and the safety of the American people and the citizens of many of our closest allies;

Whereas there are a small number of troops on the ground in Syria to train, equip, advise, and assist United States partners in the Syrian Democratic Forces fighting the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria;

Whereas the governments of the Russian Federation and Iran are fighting alongside the Assad regime against United States allies and interests;

Whereas the abrupt decision of the President to remove all United States forces in Syria without consultation enables Iran and the Russian Federation to expand their influence and presence in Syria and beyond and threatens United States partners in Syria and Israel and other allies in the region; and

Whereas the decision of the President to precipitously withdraw United States troops will leave the people of Syria even more vulnerable to violence from terrorist groups and provide time and space for al Qaeda and the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria to reconstitute and launch attacks against the United States and our allies: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Senate—

(1) expresses its gratitude to Secretary of Defense James Mattis for his decades of honorable service to the United States in the United States Marine Corps and at the Department of Defense;

(2) expresses strong support for United States alliances and partnerships with allies around the world;

(3) expresses concern with President Trump's decision to rapidly withdraw United States forces from Syria, a decision taken without consultation with Congress or our allies and partners and without apparent concern for our national and collective interests; and

(4) believes that these decisions could further undermine United States leadership in the world, weaken our alliance and partnership structure, and make it harder to achieve a world more conducive to United States interests, including support for democracy.